



This course supports the assessment for Introduction to Geography. The course covers 5 competencies and represents 3 competency units.

Introduction

Course Overview

Geography is essential to our understanding of the world. It provides a perspective that uniquely complements the study of the social sciences in general. Contrary to popular belief, the study of geography encompasses much more than memorizing the 50 United States and their capital cities. The study of geography allows us to answer questions about people and places and aids in understanding basic sociocultural, anthropological, and historical questions. Because the goal of geography is to understand the world around us, there are many connections between geography and other disciplines such as anthropology, history and science.

As you complete the assessment, you will not only develop an understanding of traditional “geographic” principles such as location and map reading, but you’ll also come to recognize the ways in which geography can help you understand the world around you.

Getting Started

Welcome to Introduction to Geography! To assist you in mastering the material of this course you will use The Visual World Atlas and two Vital Source texts, which include World regional geography: A development approach and Introduction to geography: People, places, & environment. These texts are module-based learning resources that include text to read and questions to help you practice retrieving and applying your knowledge. At the end of each module, you will assess whether you have mastered the material using the [Study Guide](#). It is highly recommended that you complete the modules in the order listed in the pacing guide. Competency will be demonstrated by the successful completion of the Introduction to Geography Objective Assessment. The course also includes a Preassessment, which you can take at any time to assess your understanding of course concepts and to determine if you are ready for the Objective Assessment. The Preassessment will provide you with a Coaching Report that will help you target the topics where you have more to learn. In addition to these resources, Course Instructors are also available to answer questions and discuss concepts of geography.

Watch the following welcome video for an introduction to this course:

Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...": [download video](#).

Competencies

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 5 competencies:

- **Competency 111.4.01: Fundamental Geographic Concepts**
The graduate will describe and discuss the basic concepts of geography.



- **Competency 111.4.02: Geographic Places and Regions**
The graduate can describe and discuss places and regions.
- **Competency 111.4.03: Physical Geographic Systems**
The graduate will describe and discuss physical systems.
- **Competency 111.4.04: Human Geographic Systems**
The graduate will describe and discuss human systems.
- **Competency 111.4.05: Human-Environment Interaction**
The graduate will describe and discuss the environment.

Learning Materials

The information in this section will help you succeed in this course.

Learning Resources

The learning resources listed in this section are required to complete the activities in this course. For many resources, WGU has provided automatic access through the course. However, you may need to manually enroll in or independently acquire other resources. Read the full instructions provided to ensure that you have access to all of your resources in a timely manner.

Automatically Enrolled Resources

You can access the learning resources listed in this section by clicking on the links provided throughout the course. You may be prompted to log in to the WGU student portal to access the resources.

VitalSource E-Texts

The following textbooks are available to you as e-texts. You will be directly linked to the specific readings required within the learning environment activities.

- Johnson, D. L.; Haarmann, V.; Johnson, M. L.; and Clawson, D. L. (2010). [World regional geography: A development approach, 11e.](#) New York, NY: Prentice Hall. eBook ISBN-10: 0-321-93965-4. ISBN?13: 978-0-321-93965-4.
- Dahlman, C. T. and Renwick, W. H. (2014). [Introduction to geography: People, places, & environment, 6e.](#) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 978-0-321-84333-3.

Note: This e-text is available to you as part of your program tuition and fees, but you may purchase a hard copy at your own expense through VitalSource or a retailer of your choice. If you choose to do so, please use the ISBN listed to ensure that you receive the correct edition. The following sites provide instruction on how to create a VitalSource account, use features such as downloading your e-texts for offline use, and purchase a print-on-demand option, if available.

- [VitalSource Navigational Video](#)
- [Print-On-Demand Option](#)

World Atlas

In addition to these textbooks, we have also provided an electronic World Atlas via the WGU e-library for you to use as a reference as you work through the course.



- Fortin, François Ed. (2008). [The Visual World Atlas](#). Montreal, Quebec: QA International. ISBN: 978-2-7644-0889-6.

Note: These e-texts are available to you as part of your program tuition and fees, but you may purchase hard copies at your own expense through a retailer of your choice. If you choose to do so, please use the ISBN listed to ensure that you receive the correct edition.

WGU Library Articles

This course utilizes resources via the WGU Library, with articles available for you to open and download. For instructions on how to access WGU Library articles, see the "[Accessing WGU Library Articles](#)" page.

Live Sessions

Cohort live sessions may be held periodically, including Q & A sessions. Check the "Explore Cohort Offerings?" section of this course for the most current information and times.

Pacing Guide

The pacing guide suggests a step-by-step structure to pace your completion of learning activities. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the pacing guide carefully to complete the course in the suggested path.

- [Introduction to Geography Pacing Guide](#)

Note: This pacing guide does not replace the course. Please continue to refer to the course for a comprehensive list of the resources and activities.

Study Guide

The course instructors have created a study guide to guide your work in the course. While the study guide will help you practice important information, you should work through all of the activities listed in the course to gain competence.

The [Introduction to Geography Study Guide](#) is designed to help you identify the key concepts as you read through the course material. You should read the questions for each section before you begin the reading, and as you find the answers record them on the study guide.

- [Introduction to Geography Study Guide](#)

The [Introduction to Geography Places and Regions Chart](#) is designed to help you organize the major geographic characteristics of the regions of the world covered in the World Regional Geography. As you identify major characteristics in the readings, fill in the chart.

- [Introduction to Geography Places and Regions Study Chart](#)

Course Work

Complete the activities in this section to gain competence.

Geographic Concepts



In this section, you'll read and study the five themes of Geography, and the newer National Geographic Standards which will help to guide the rest of your work in this assessment. Understanding these themes will help to ensure that you understand the most complex concepts that you will encounter throughout the assessment.

Additionally, to successfully complete this assessment, you'll need to be able to locate a variety of places and landforms on various maps. In this section, you'll study both the various types of maps and practice using them.

Topic 1 Geographic Perspective

This topic will explore the major constructs and perspectives of geography.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **111.4.01: Concepts of Geography**

The graduate will describe and discuss the basic concepts of geography.

Read and Review

- Read Johnson, [introduction](#).
- Review Dahlman, [book preface \(p. xii\)](#) to understand how the book is arranged.
- Read Dahlman, [chapter 1 \("Introduction to Geography"\)](#).

National Geographic Standards and the Five Themes of Geography

- Read "[Five Themes of Geography](#)".
- Watch PennState Public Broadcasting. 2010. "[Geospatial Revolution](#)" (This video is the trailer. You are encouraged to view the entire video series)
- Read the National Council on Geographic Education, "[What is Geographic Education?](#)"
- Read The National Council on Geographic Education, "[Geography for Life: National Geography Standards 2e.](#)"
- Read National Geographic Education, "[National Geography Standards Index](#)".
- Assess your knowledge by completing the corresponding section in the [Introduction to Geography Study Guide](#)

Defining Regions

- Read *National Geographic Education*, "[National Geographic Standard 5](#)" (use Show All).
- Assess your knowledge by completing the corresponding section in the [Introduction to Geography Study Guide](#).

Reading and Understanding Maps

- Review [Dahlman, pp. 22-25, "Latitude and Longitude"](#) to understand how latitude and longitude works to locate and identify points on the surface of the earth.
- Download and Install [Google Earth](#) for use (you do not need to use the Pro version).
 - [Google Earth tutorials](#)
 - Practice using Google Earth finding various locations
 - Whitehouse
 - Yosemite National Park



- Your state capital
 - You residence
 - Royal Naval Observatory in Greenwich, England
- Review "[Reference Atlas](#)".
 - How to use this book
 - Locate the seven continents using the atlas

Topic 2 Physical Geographic Systems, Human-Environment Interaction, and Human Geographic Systems

In this section you will be introduced to the basic concepts of the two broad fields of Geography, Physical Geography and Human Geography.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 111.4.03: Physical Geographic Systems**
The graduate will describe and discuss physical systems.
- **Competency 111.4.04: Human Geographic Systems**
The graduate will describe and discuss human systems.
- **Competency 111.4.05: Human-Environment Interaction**
The graduate will describe and discuss the environment.

Physical Geographic Systems

Read Dahlman

- [chapter 2 \("Weather, Climate, and Climate Change"\)](#).
- [chapter 4 \("Biosphere"\)](#).
- [chapter 3 \("Landforms"\)](#).

Human-Environment Interaction

Read Dahlman (*Introduction to Geography*)

- [chapter 5 \("Earth's Resources and Environmental Protection"\)](#).

Human Geographic Systems

Read Johnson

- [chapter 1 \("Geography and Development in an Era of Globalization"\)](#).

Read Dahlman

- [chapter 6 \("Population and Migration"\)](#).
- [chapter 10 \("Cities and Urbanization"\)](#).

Places and Regions of the World

In this section, you will be introduced to several places and regions on Earth. You will study



North and South America, Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

Topic 1 North and South America

In this section, you'll begin your study of the world by focusing on the areas likely to be most familiar to you: North and South America. As you read and study the regions, nations, and physical features of this area, be sure to take careful notes. Take the time to study the maps and other visual aids available in your text and other resources so that you develop a thorough understanding of the places, cultures and features you are reading about.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 111.4.02: Geographic Places and Regions**
The graduate can describe and discuss places and regions.
- **Competency 111.4.03: Physical Geographic Systems**
The graduate will describe and discuss physical systems.
- **Competency 111.4.04: Human Geographic Systems**
The graduate will describe and discuss human systems.
- **Competency 111.4.05: Human-Environment Interaction**
The graduate will describe and discuss the environment.

North America

Read Johnson [chapter 2 \("United States and Canada"\)](#).

Latin America and the Carribean

Read Johnson [chapter 3 \("Latin America and the Caribbean"\)](#).

Topic 2 Europe and Central Asia

The activities for this section introduce the various populations and places located in Europe and Central Asia. The activities are designed to help you develop and understanding of the people, regions, and other features of this part of the world. As you read and study the nations and physical features of this area, be sure to take careful notes. Take the time to study the maps and other visual aids available in your text and other resources so that you develop a thorough understanding of the places, cultures and features you are reading about.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 111.4.02: Geographic Places and Regions**
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Europe



Read Johnson [chapter 4 \("Europe"\)](#).



Northern Eurasia

Read Johnson [chapter 5 \(“Northern Eurasia”\)](#).

Central Asia and Afghanistan

Read Johnson [chapter 6 \(“Central Asia and Afghanistan”\)](#).

Topic 3 Middle East and Africa

From news programs to documentary films, this part of the world frequently appears in all forms of media. Understanding the fascinating history, culture, and physical geography of this area is essential to understanding many of the most significant current events that we hear about every day. As you read and study the regions, nations, and physical features of this area, be sure to take careful notes. Take the time to study the maps and other visual aids available in your text so that you develop a thorough understanding of the places, cultures and features you are reading about.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 111.4.02: Geographic Places and Regions**
The graduate can describe and discuss places and regions.
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The Middle East and North Africa

Read Johnson [chapter 7 \(“The Middle East and North Africa”\)](#).

Africa South of the Sahara

Read Johnson [chapter 8 \(“Africa South of the Sahara”\)](#).

Topic 4 Asia and the Pacific Islands

Asia is a vast and diverse continent. While the many nations of this part of the world share many similarities, there are also many diverse and interesting cultures and features to study. As you read and study the regions, nations, and physical features of this area, be sure to take careful notes. Take the time to study the maps and other visual aids available in your text so that you develop a thorough understanding of the places, cultures, and features you are reading about.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 111.4.02: Geographic Places and Regions**
The graduate can describe and discuss places and regions.
- **Competency 111.4.03: Physical Geographic Systems**
The graduate will describe and discuss physical systems.
- **Competency 111.4.04: Human Geographic Systems**



The graduate will describe and discuss human systems.

- **Competency 111.4.05: Human-Environment Interaction**

The graduate will describe and discuss the environment.

South Asia

Read Johnson [chapter 9 \(“South Asia”\)](#).

East Asia

Read Johnson [chapter 10 \(“East Asia”\)](#).

Southeast Asia

Read Johnson [chapter 11 \(“Southeast Asia”\)](#).

Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands

Read Johnson [chapter 12 \(“Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands”\)](#).

Assessment Prep

Review the information below before taking your assessment.

Objective Assessment

The Preassessment

How will you know that you are ready to take the objective assessment exam to complete the course? You may take up to 3 Pre-Assessment exams in the course. Your Pre-Assessment should earn both an 81% composite score and at least an 80% on each sub-section prior to taking the Objective Assessment. You are encouraged to remember that the Pre-Assessment is only a sample of the course themes and material you may encounter on the Objective Assessment. Contact your Course Instructor to help guide your studies more completely and to determine your readiness for assessment.

Coaching Report Guide

The [Coaching Report Guide](#) is an **essential** resource that provides you with key course content areas that correspond to the five competencies and related sub-topics shown on all Coaching Reports. Use the guide to help you know what to study based on assessment results given in your coaching report.

Policies

Please review the following important policies.

Accessibility Policy

Western Governors University recognizes and fulfills its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and similar state laws. Western Governors University is committed to provide reasonable accommodation(s) to qualified disabled learners in University programs and activities as is required by applicable law(s). The Office of Student Accessibility Services serves as the principal point of contact for students seeking accommodations and can be contacted at ADASupport@wgu.edu.



Netiquette Guidelines

Netiquette Guidelines

Online Netiquette: Guidelines for WGU Students These guidelines are a quick reference source for interacting with fellow students, mentors, and WGU staff. While these guidelines adhere to the standards outlined in the WGU Student Handbook, they are not meant as a replacement for the explicit information presented in the handbook.

Be professional and respectful:

- Be civil and kind in your interactions with others.
- Respond to important emails sent to you.
- Be cautious when using ALL CAPS (yelling), sarcasm, and humor
- Be cautious when posting content (pictures, comments)
- Avoid forwarding spam or selling anything.
- Keep comments related to the topic.
- Be aware that mentors, students, and others live in different time zones.

Be short, concise, and readable:

- Use sans serif fonts (e.g., Arial, Helvetica) with a point size of 12 or higher.
- Use acronyms cautiously. For example, common acronyms such as FAQ and RSVP are fine; however, unknown acronyms like UCET or USOE should be spelled out.

Be credible:

- Cite references and sources such as web links, articles, books, etc., when possible.
- Re-read your emails to clarify and ensure it sends the intended "message."

Be safe:

- Keep personal information private to avoid identity fraud.
- Keep other's information private (WGU students, companies, etc.)